

TITLE: Remember the Mission!

**Central point:** Every miracle Jesus did, every parable Jesus told, and everything he said or did was to reveal God’s mission for his people. The people benefited, but the point was advancing the mission.

TEXT: Mark 2:1-12 (CSB)

When he entered Capernaum again after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many people gathered together that there was no more room, not even in the doorway, and he was speaking the word to them. They came to him bringing a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they were not able to bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after digging through it, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

But some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts: “Why does he speak like this? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Right away Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were thinking like this within themselves and said to them, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat, and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” —he told the paralytic— “I tell you: get up, take your mat, and go home.”

Immediately he got up, took the mat, and went out in front of everyone. As a result, they were all astounded and gave glory to God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Mark 2:1-12

1. Verse 1-2
  - a. Jesus returns to Capernaum, to whatever “his home” was – likely Simon Peter’s home
  - b. When word spread out, the people came to see him
    - i. Doubtless they were there for him to heal the infirmed, the possessed, etc.
  - c. Instead, Jesus preached the word to them
    - i. Mark 1:38 – came to preach the gospel
    - ii. Mark 1:15 – What was the gospel? Isaiah 61:1-2a
    - iii. Jesus’ central mission was always his focus. The rest happened in order to advance that mission. Grace has come. God has heard their cries and sent a Deliverer, just as in the days of old. Except this time, the deliverance is once for all.
2. Verse 3-4
  - a. Four men are singled out for this illustration.

- i. Why? Because their situation forwards Jesus' mission.
- ii. Does this mean Jesus is merely opportunistic? No! Remember Acts 3:1-10.
  - a. Jesus did not heal this man though he was placed at the Temple daily. Jesus would have seen him.
  - b. Instead the disciples healed him after Jesus had ascended.
  - c. Once they healed him, they had an arena to preach the gospel.
  - d. God grants healings/miracles on his schedule, not ours, in order to point us to himself
    - i. Acts 3 is just one example
    - ii. Luke 17:14/Leviticus 14
    - iii. John 11:41
    - iv. John 9:1-3

### 3. Verse 5-7

- a. Jesus forgives the man's sin rather than heal him!
  - i. Jesus was always interested in getting straight to the heart of the matter
    - i. This is part of why he answered questions with questions so often
    - ii. What the man really needs is forgiveness, more so than healing
      - a. If Jesus heals him but doesn't forgive him, what's the point?
      - b. Anything else is trading one set of shackles for another.
      - c. Sickness/health, rich/poor, etc., CAN be blessings and curses, but they are not automatically so. They are all CIRCUMSTANCES.
- b. Forgiveness causes considerable pushback among the religiously educated
  - i. Luke 5:17 shows who all was there.
  - ii. Jewish rabbis equated infirmities universally with sin issues
    - i. Jewish rabbis had a saying: there is no sick man healed of his sickness until all of his sins have been forgiven him.
    - ii. Jesus was both meeting the paralytic where he was at and the religious elite where they were at.
  - iii. The scribes and Pharisees had a lot right, but they also had a lot wrong.
    - i. They knew forgiveness came from God alone.
    - ii. They always equated infirmity with sin.
      - a. While this is true in some cases in OT – Gehazi, Miriam, Uzziah – it is not universally true
    - iii. Their preconceived notions of God didn't fit with what Jesus did
      - a. They had the Shema, which said the Lord our God was "echad" – a plural singular.
      - b. Still it never entered their minds that God could be standing before them as one of them, thus having authority to forgive.

- c. He could have healed that man and nobody would have batted an eye, in that sense. But to forgive sin?  
Inconceivable!
    - iv. We can have a lot right about what and who we believe God to be as well
      - i. We can be filled with all kinds of Bible knowledge.
      - ii. We can allow that knowledge, like the religious elite, to puff us up.
      - iii. In so doing we can envision a God that never challenges our thinking or goes against what we believe.
      - iv. There are many today who have done this, and in so doing have created a god in their own image.
      - v. On the flip side, we can take our Bible knowledge and twist the Scripture in such a way that guarantees certain things for us that God never promised.
        - a. This is also creating a god in our own image.
        - b. There are whole movements including lots of popular churches today, with famous pastors and music groups, dedicated to this.
          - i. Promises of prosperity
          - ii. Spiritual self-help/morality improvement
          - iii. Perfect health
          - iv. The supernatural
          - v. A breakthrough
          - vi. Guaranteeing any of the above is counter to scripture and reduces God to a cosmic genie
      - vi. Both of these are wrong and do violence to the text of Scripture and against the true nature of who God is.
      - vii. Is it wrong to *ask* for these things? Absolutely not! But we must not be presumptuous.
4. Verse 8-12
  - a. The next action portrays Jesus consistently throughout the rest of the book of Mark
    - i. The gospel depicts Jesus as one who is undeterred from his mission
    - ii. He serves men in small ways so that He might one day serve them in the grandest way possible
    - iii. Everything he says and does drives himself and his followers toward the mission, which is reconciliation between God and men
  - b. This is what Jesus means by “that you may know”
    - i. So you, Pharisees and scribes, may know
      - i. Messiah has come
      - ii. I have the power to forgive sins because I AM
        - a. Son of Man has roots in Daniel 7:13-14
        - b. Messianic title devoid of kingly confusion
  - c. Dayenu (It would have been sufficient.)

- i. Jewish retelling during the Seder
- ii. 15 conditional sentences (listing the first 10), each ending in “dayenu”
  - i. If He had brought us out of Egypt.
  - ii. If He had executed justice upon the Egyptians.
  - iii. If He had executed justice upon their gods.
  - iv. If He had slain their first-born.
  - v. If He had given to us their health and wealth.
  - vi. If He had split the sea for us.
  - vii. If He had led us through on dry land.
  - viii. If He had drowned our oppressors.
  - ix. If He had provided for our needs in the wilderness for 40 years.
  - x. If He had fed us manna.
- iii. Each of these 10 has to do with the Egyptians/Exodus, with a tagline
  - i. “The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD”
  - ii. “You will know that I am the LORD.”
- d. 71 times in the CSB you see the phrase “will know that I AM the LORD.” Each of these is attached to a work of God, in accordance with His plan, on His schedule, to point people toward Himself.

#### APPLYING THE WORD

1. Do I recognize that Christ worked the greatest miracle, forgiveness of sin, in my life?
  - a. If you are not a believer, your application is clear. It’s available. Take hold of it!
  - b. If you are a believer but you don’t recognize it, what is clouding my view?
2. Do I recognize that the greatest miracle is sufficient for me? If not, why?